# The Seed Sower.

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## Sonnet.

[*To an Invalid Lady, on her Husband's Death.*]

Dear lady, sorrow-sainted, whose long pain
  Rebuked us by its smile, or hushed, like songs
  The sad, retired nightingale prolongs
From depth of holy wood or dim green lane.

God waits a new smile from thee, as He turns
  A new smile on thee, and would draw forth praise
  From holier shades, and tune thee to upraise
The new song where the beauty solemn burns.

Death is the touch lets loose love's eloquence
  As never it could speak in its young dream;
  The very Love Eternal could not seem
Most winsome till it died, nor most intense.

O, called to pain, but chos'n to sorrow, know
The Eternal song that sounds in Christian woe.

P. T. FORSYTH.

## Desultory Reading.

O finest essence of delicious rest!
  To bid for some short space the busy mill
  Of anxious, ever-grinding thought be still;
And let the weary brain and throbbing breast
Be by another's cooling hand caressed.
  This volume in my hand, I hold a charm
  Which lifts me out of reach of wrong or harm.
I sail away from trouble; and, most blessed
Of every blessing, can myself forget:
  Can rise above the instance low and poor
Into the mighty law that governs yet.
  This hinged cover, like a well-hung door,
Shuts out the noises of the jangling day,
These fair leaves fan unwelcome thoughts away.

## Two Guild Addresses:

GIVEN AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE LONDON GUILDS UNION.*

### I.

### THE HEROIC TEMPER IN COMMON CONDITIONS.

BY THE REV. J. WOOD.

Mr. Wood began by saying that in "Middlemarch," that great novel of life and manners, George Eliot sets out to show that the circumstances, the social environment, the civilisation of our present age, make anything like heroic action quite impossible, especially for women. However noble the nature of a woman may be, she finds herself cribbed, cabined, and confined by what George Eliot calls "the meanness of opportunity." This made "Middlemarch" seem to him the saddest of her works, as it emphasised so strongly the belittling power of circumstances to narrow noble natures, and hinder them from reaching up to any great ideal. But there was no such thing as "meanness of opportunity," and often when the outward world of opportunity seemed poorest, the greatest results were obtained. Who were the men and women whose names most live in the world's affections and in its admiration? Were they not those who had struggled with the meanness of opportunity, and conquered in spite of it? Were they not to us the exemplars of what a noble and chivalrous

* See Report under Guild News.

spirit might do? Poor indeed were the lives of boys and girls who had not had visions of becoming heroes and heroines. We have all had this beautiful faith in ourselves, but, alas! have later on come to the conclusion that heroic things are not for us, that there is nothing for us but the daily hum-drum of business, with no chance of showing a great spirit.

But true heroism is not doing things on a great scale, but doing the things of everyday life, be they small or be they great, in a great spirit in which there is denial of self, the exhibition of a true and noble ideal, a forgiving and magnanimous spirit under many provocations. And no man will ever become a hero who is not always practising heroism; a mean man will not be noble on occasion, nor a cowardly man courageous. There are men who are brave on occasion, but it was in them—occasion did not create it. If men are to be heroes when the moment of emergency comes, they must have been heroes beforehand. It is not the thing of an instant, an inspiration of the gods, but is part of the man, and flashes out when occasion demands.

The heroism of the workshop, of the kitchen, the heroism of parents, wives, sisters, the heroism of the hospital, the heroism of the civil life is often of a nobler quality than that of the battle-field. There is no glory, no Victoria Cross, but as much courage is needed as for any deed from the days of chivalry onward.

Look at the firemen of our great cities; there are no nobler, braver men, doing things which are altogether heroic, but the excitement of the moment, the desire of praise, are but poor and weak motives and could not keep a man's head and heart cool under such dangers as theirs. It is the simple sense of duty, and the knowledge that they are doing a good and useful work, the knowledge that they are in God's hands—and the man who does forget himself at the call of duty *is* in God's hands—this is what gives the man the hero's heart. But you may say, "I am not a fireman; I am only a clerk, or a shop-man, and what chance is there for me to show the heroic temper?" But there is abundant scope and urgent need for it. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," said St. Paul. Your workshops and offices, your banks in this great city, are places where the greatest courage is needed not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, where the simple, honest avowal, "I am a Christian," would be met with a mocking jest, ten times harder to bear than a blow. Are there no clubs, no social circles where a frank confession that a man believed in Christ's golden rule would provoke a gesture of surprise, a curl of the lip, a shrug of the shoulders, requiring more and higher courage to face than the bullets of a battlefield? All who go out into the life of this great city are tempted to say with St. Peter, "I know not the man." How much courage it takes not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ!

There are no conditions, no circumstances, without some scope for showing a great spirit; no position so humble but may be glorified by the heroic temper. And to a soul that can face temptation, the soul that can be generous, forgiving, the soul that dares speak the truth and confess—hardest of all—its discipleship to Christ, there is no such thing as the meanness of opportunity. Every opportunity becomes then the occasion of showing of what stuff we are made. As the circle in a dewdrop is as true as that which the heavens make in their sweep, so the spirit of love, truth, honour, and courage may be as complete and beautiful in all the small deeds of common life as in any that are done on a world-wide stage with "far resonant action."

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## II.

## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DO FOR THE CHURCH.

By the Rev. H. Gow, B.A.

Mr. Gow began by saying that middle-aged people might declare that young people have too much attention given them. Why make such a fuss about them? But young people are not tied down to custom and set ways. There are two things in special about them—they are critical idealists, often more critical than idealists, yet criticism in them rested on a great idealism. It arises from young people feeling that goodness and greatness might be so easily attained, they have a high ideal of worship and of life, and look round on the ordinary commonplaces of life, and do not realise the difficulty of attaining it. They believe in its attainment with all

their strength, and it is this splendid faith of theirs which is the basis of their indignation and criticism. It does help us to keep our faith strong, it does tend to strengthen us to hear the young idealists around us say that all is going for advance. And then young people are so susceptible to the heroic appeal—not a call to a simple, easy passive life, but a call to a heroic life, to effort and war and heroism. It is the great strength of the High Church party of the present day. There is the glamour of the cross about these High Church and Catholic friends of ours; they do not promise anything very easy; they make people who have been thinking a great deal about dress and dinners give up these things, and go to church at all sorts of awkward times. What we want to do is not to make things easier, but to make people recognise that religion is worth a great deal of sacrifice, and that we must give up a great deal of time in order to be worthy members of a Christian church. A comfortable religion is a hopeless religion; it is a call to a difficult task, and it is the young people who respond.

Young people can help by being present at worship and by making efforts to be there. There is room for heroism in worship. There were too many "weather and comfort permitting" people among them. A minister does not want a congregation to attend out of pity for himself, but he does look round in dismay on what appears to be a growing disregard of public worship on Sunday. It is a good thiug for our young people to get out into the country, and what he would like to do is not to reduce the number of bicycle rides for those who work all the week, but he wished that all the members of our churches could always find time to spend an hour in some little country church, or quiet Bethel, it does not greatly matter what kind.

What our young people can do for our churches more than in any other way is to attend worship, and not lightly to break a custom or tradition which is of such enormous value to the world and themselves. What is worth doing at all is worth doing regularly, and to be prepared to make sacrifices for attendance at public worship is what our young people can do. He had heard young people complain of the difficulty of getting to feel at home in a church, that people seemed stand-off; but perhaps they were engrossed by their cares and were not as stand-off as they seemed. They must not be offended by an atmosphere of coldness but ready to take opportunities of being present, and they themselves should take the initiative, and not stand in a corner and wait to be spoken to, but should be ready to welcome the others. A strong, true church should have many activities, there should be something in which everyone can make his mark, something on his own lines, and if he could not follow the leadership of someone else, go to the minister or superintendent and offer suggestions, but at the same time always offer help. They are always glad to have help.

But above all the young men and women should care for the intellectual side of things—look for themselves at the deep, engrossing, tremendous problems of life and soul. The great problem of life and immortality is a matter that deeply concerns either man or woman. Search into these tremendous problems and think about them, and not be content with criticism. They wanted to go deeper down into things than that. Their duty and responsibility was a very serious one, nobody could think for them, and however hard they might work, and however much they might deplore their deficient education they might do something. In the talks he had had with people not the least stimulus had come from factory hands, who had only a very short time to think about things, and who were engaged in the rough manual work of life, but it was this contact with this very important part of life that helped most with their theology, and it was in the contact with hard work that they came into truest contact with spiritual life. Mr. Gow concluded an inspiring address with a powerful appeal to those present to consecrate their lives to high and nobler ideals.

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So-called little sins are ever more dangerous to character than so-called great ones. Green flies do more harm to our rose bushes than a thunderstorm, and the microbes our medical men are so proud of nowadays are more mischievous than an earthquake. Their power of evil does not depend on their magnitude, but on their tremendous capacity of reproduction.

# The Great Deep.*

"I tell you out of a sad heart the truth."
—*Stephen Phillips.*

In the most famous of his allegories, Plato compares this world of the senses to a vast cave, whose inhabitants move among shadows, never beholding things themselves, but only their more or less dim and distorted reflections; and he tells us that occasionally certain elect souls are permitted to ascend into the world of sunshine and reality, to return after a while to the cave, and to lighten its gloom and correct the views of its inhabitants by the relation of the strange and scarcely credible things they had beheld in the regions above. It did not strike Plato to speculate on the possibility of reversing the process—making some of the happy dwellers in the upper air descend into the dreary underworld, to behold its sights, and report on what they had learned of the ways and lives of the "prisoners of the cave," after their re-emergence from its depths.

There has of late grown up a literature which fulfils the very useful function just indicated. It is written by men who have of their own will made the descent into the Cave, the social and economic Tartarus, in which live and die millions of our more or less unconsidered fellow-beings; and they come back bringing strange news about ways of living, modes of thought, standards of conduct which to most of us are as unfamiliar, if not more so, than those of savage tribes, yet which have their being in our midst.

A little book has been recently issued, belonging to this class of publications, and deserving of careful perusal. We have here no melodrama, no lurid colourings, neither limelight effects nor social panaceas, but just a record of things seen, interpreted by an observant and sympathetic mind. Its title, "From the Abyss," explains itself; the anonymous author is one of those who have gained at first hand experience of the lives led by the innumerable crowds that dwell huddled together in narrow lanes, model dwellings, tenements extending over mile after shabby mile of the metropolis; and the significant thing is that, though he speculates on the outcome of the present condition of things, he has no plan of amelioration to propose, no solution so much as to hint at. He has seen excellently-excogitated methods, well-meant efforts at work, and he smiles a little wearily and sadly as he relates of the art galleries and museums provided by kindly millionaires for the population of the Abyss, which will not look at their contents; of the amiable young men who try to elevate the masses—who do not want to be elevated—by "frequent lectures on the ethics of Dante, the poetry of the Renaissance, and similar pleasing topics." He notes, as did another recent writer, in the volume "The Heart of the Empire," that the University and other settlements have not fulfilled the brilliant hopes with which they were inaugurated, and that at present this movement, as a whole, hangs fire. He is profoundly impressed with the terrible wastage of human life and its possibilities of good and happiness which he sees around him, but is too honest to profess belief in the efficacy of any existing agencies, or to suggest a cure of his own patenting. For the latter reason his pages make rather heart-breaking reading, because you are never cheered by the pleasing reflection that at least a way *exists* for the ending of all this misery, and that the author is in possession of the secret, which he will reveal in the closing chapter as a "happy ending;" but, on the other hand, the booklet bears the stamp of sober veracity, steering a mean between sentimentality and aloofness, and permitting us at any rate to gain that comprehension of the facts which is the indispensable preliminary condition of reform.

The main features of the situation governing life in the Abyss are set forth with graphic force in the two sketches entitled respectively, "Of the Quantity of Us," and "Of the Silence of Us;" while the irresistible advance of the abysmal populations, overflowing into respectable and idyllic suburbs, which they convert into slums, forms the subject of a paper, "Of Our Growth." We do not remember having ever come upon so clear a description of the creation of slums—as it were by a necessity of fate—as is contained in the latter chapter, which begins with the "Fair Light" Estate being offered for sale, and ends after only a few years in grime and multitudinous squalor and desolation: "so in a kind of an irresistible muddy wave the Abyss rolls onward."

* "From the Abyss." London: Brimley Johnson. 1s. net.

The mere numbers of its denizens form their greatest enemy, which overshadows all their existence. "All around us stretches the evidence of our perpetual increase. Gigantic erections continually arise, into which are swept our children for certain periods of each day; no sooner is one completed than it is filled and another begun. We jostle each other on the pavements; we choke up our main streets with our markets, openly trafficking before all men; we fill every conceivable space in London, except our churches. And neither day nor night, summer nor winter, seed time nor harvest, yield any check to our impetuous increase."

Admirable and instructive are the paragraphs in which we are given to understand the inarticulateness which must bewilder and sadden all who are trying in any way to influence these dim masses: "Always noisy, we rarely speak; always resonant with the din of many-voiced existence, we never reach the level of ordered articulate utterance; never attain a language that the world beyond can hear. . . . We have no meeting-place, no newspaper, no common centre of government; we drift to our work daily, dumbly contented if work is easy and lucrative, dumbly resentful if the reverse conditions prevail, but dumb always, happy or miserable, poor or prosperous, living for the most part with no articulate expression, and passing without a cry 'to the Eternal Silence.'"

On the whole, the Abyss is far more respectable than those who know it not from personal observation are apt to imagine; but its respectability is of the kind that makes one despair of what the author calls "the problem of John Smith." The conditions under which he lives tend to the gradual but sure elimination of both the highest and the lowest elements of human nature, to "the production of that nightmare vision of the speculative thinker, the 'economic man,' . . . a sort of polished, whitewashed variety of man, with life reduced to its simplest dimensions. . . . He will attain food and drink; in times of depressed trade he will attain less food and drink; his prosperity will be signalised by more food and drink. . . . No story of murder or outrage, or fierce intoxicating discontent, or dreams of impossible millennium will haunt the block dweller of the future. The ideal working man of the Tory democrat, he will pass from the great deep to the great deep, industrious, cheerful, vacant, untroubled by envy, aspiration or desire." As for the 'John Smith' of to-day, he describes him as "a shabby, cheery, ineffective figure. A British householder and ruler of an Empire upon which the sun never sets—an immortal spirit, journeying between two eternities through a world of tragic meaning, to the significance of which hs seems destined to be for ever blind." And of such is our imperial race!

The worst of issuing anonymously a strikingly able piece of writing is that the author's intention—which was probably the modest one of concentrating the interest of the reader on his work instead of his personality—is directly defeated. Both during and after the perusal of this brochure, we found ourselves trying to discover the possible author, to identify him with this or that living writer of similar sympathies. For a time we felt sure that the pen which indited these vivid, pathetic sketches was the same which wrote "No. 5, John Street;" but a closer study of the style and vocabulary employed compelled us to abandon that theory. Whoever he is, the writer of "From the Abyss" deserves to rank by the side of Mr. Whiteing, with whom he has much in common, both as regards outlook and mode of expression. We will close this notice by adding to our already copious excerpts a final quotation which illustrates in equal degree the author's literary art and his general attitude toward the problems which he can only describe, not solve:

"Whither is this tending, and what is to be the end of it all? That is the one unanswerable question. Remember again the South American forest. Tall trees insolently rise to heaven; surrounding them is the mass of tangled, choking vegetation; gorgeous colours of unequalled beauty; ceaseless, silent strife. Below are all forms of life, driven under, forced to adapt themselves to unnatural surroundings, distorted into repulsive, twisted, grotesque forms of existence, each seemingly prepared for any monstrous change if only it can preserve its life and propagate its kind. Some, as parasites, cling to the tall trees in order that they, too, may see the sun, finally throttling their protectors in their deadly embrace. Others take fresh root on the ledges of boughs, or support themselves by slimy

suckers or clinging thorns. Everywhere exuberant, many-featured life, struggling under the tropical sun; a struggle continued ardently year after year, through innumerable succeeding generations. Only always at length the end. Some inexplicable change; slowly, imperceptibly, the torrent of life has over-reached itself; the struggle has become too terrific; the vitality is gradually dying. And then, as the whole mass festers in all the gorgeous, wonderful beauty of decay, comes the mangrove—dark-leaved, dank, slippery, unlovely, sign and symbol of the inevitable end. And with the mangrove the blackmarsh, and the reeking, pestilential mud. Until at length all the glory and life and struggle of the tropical forest has passed away for ever; and in its place stretch the wide spaces of sullen swamp, and dull, gnarled, fruitless trees, and the silence of stagnant, scum-coated pools, and the salt, interminable, tideless sea."

J. WARSCHAUER.

## Pardon.

The *consequences* of an act are physical, and go by natural laws. What we call the *sin* of an act is a moral condition, subject to moral or spiritual law. These laws always leave the way open for expiation, atonement, pardon: which all mean at bottom the same thing—that is, that one shall overcome it, outgrow it, get the better of it in his own heart and life. There are laws and conditions that help him in this; and these are what we appeal to in dealing with sin religiously.

But first let us look back for a moment to the consequences. These, too, to some extent, we can control and overcome—not by imploring an act of forgiveness from above; but by practising simple fidelity here below. There are remedies and reliefs—as when we try to heal our child of a sickness or accident it has fallen into by our neglect. This very care and pains of ours may work by spiritual as well as natural law—by creating a tenderer and dearer relation between parent and child than there would have been if the child had not suffered that wrong. Nothing in all the world is more deeply touching than what we may sometimes see—the love of a little child, crippled or blinded, perhaps, by some neglect for which the parents can never forgive themselves; while the child loves them all the dearer, unknowing of the deep pain which is the well-spring of that tender and devoted care. The parents' love has in it something of remorse: the child's love has in it something of the sweetness of an act of pardon. But shall we say the child pardons the fault it does not know?

Now what can we possibly mean, when we ask to be forgiven *as we forgive* the debts that are owing to ourselves? An honest man does not wish to escape the payment of his debts. As long as his means hold out, and he can do it without positive cruelty to his family, he chooses that all he can earn and all he can spare shall go to the payment of them. He will not even accept the forgiveness of them, though the law fully justifies and even offers it. An honourable merchant, who has failed and afterwards made a fortune, will not hold himself released from the old obligation: his sense of business honour will force him to make full payment when he can, principal and interest. That is a style of conduct which we sometimes see in men of the world. It ought to shame those religionists, who talk to men as if the one great aim of religion were to escape the just consequences of their acts, and shirk their debts by getting some one else to pay for them. On the contrary, what true religion does for a man is to make him honest enough and strong enough to look those consequences in the face, and take them without complaint, whatever is his honest share of them. If he accepts a meaner principle, the mischief does not stop with him. That feeling itself which makes the life of conscience is deadened. That wholesome judgment which holds every man to the consequences of his acts is debauched and bribed. The very foundations themselves of civil society are undermined when the motive of private virtue is diminished: we have done what we could to make human life itself false, hollow, and corrupt.

Now precisely what true morality is in our relation to men and the laws of social life, that true religion is in our relation to God and the laws of the spiritual life. Let us look at it in the same manly fashion. In one case, as much as in the other, we do not ask to escape our obligations; or to escape the consequences of not meeting our obligations. If a man really cares

for anything—his farm, his learning, his profession, his discoveries—he wants to do not as little as he can: he wants to do as much as he can. His aim is to do a man's full work in the world, according to his means and ability. And again: no man who does try, and who makes mistakes and faults, wants the wheels of the universe stopped, or set going the other way, to relieve him of the consequences of his misdoing. Any such concession to his moral weakness, he clearly sees, would be to increase the weakness and aggravate the harm. It is a law of life and hope we want, not a law of discouragement and death. The great gains in human power have almost always come from the resolute effort to overcome some weakness, or make good some mistake, or supply some lack.

Mature life is rich with the fruit of such victories: as wood that is grown on an exposed mountain-side has its grain enriched and made precious by the storms it has wrestled with, by the bruises and scars it has outgrown, by the wrenches and twists that warped its fibre, while it was struggling through the exposures of its earlier growth. Every ripe and noble character, if it should suddenly be made transparent, would show the marks of similar bruises and scars; and we should see that what we took for a native grace is really the fruit of a moral victory. Our talk about debt and credit in our account with the Eternal is only a figure of rhetoric. It means the service we owe in a good life—a debt from which there is no discharge; or else the consequence of negligence in that duty, from which there is no escape. And when we speak of the forgiving that debt we speak in a figure or symbol: what we mean is the fruit of true penitence or faithful effort—that joy and peace which are in the soul of him "whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered," as wrenches and strains are covered by a new growth of fibre; as bruises and scars are covered by the growth of sound flesh: and this is a very genuine and a constant experience in the religious life.

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A man aroused to a sense of duty which he only half obeys is in great danger of becoming a worse man than before, as a partial thaw is generally followed by an intense frost.

## The Limitless Universe.

In all our speculations regarding the position of mankind in the Universe, we are apt to lose sight of the infinitesimally small proportion which this earth and its inhabitants bear to the great limitless Universe.

The early Arabic and Jewish writers seemed to think that God had given mankind, and especially their part of the race, His special care. Astounding was the presumption of the ancient Jews in regarding themselves as the chosen people, destined to annex the earth and all that it contained for their own special benefit.

But much more recent thinkers seem to leave out of their calculations the logical certainty that there are millions of other populated globes in space, with inhabitants whose organisms, conditions of life, and character may far transcend or be really like our own. Are we to suppose that those people never die because they have never sinned, or, rather, are we to believe they pass of necessity through somewhat similar changes to ourselves?

It is in our power to discern the existence by inference and calculation of essences and entities which our very tiny powers of ocular observation must always fail to see.

We are only very slowly beginning to work out the experiments by which we have discovered forces hitherto unknown and unknowable to primitive races of observers and discoverers.

The laws and properties of electricity, explosive gases, germ-life, or the everlasting procession of seed and plant, the laws of colour and the properties of colour producers, and a hundred other hitherto unknown and unseen worlds, are beginning to be opened up to us, and what we once regarded as the whole of the ocean of truth is now seen to be only a few wavelets on its margin. R. S. KIRK.

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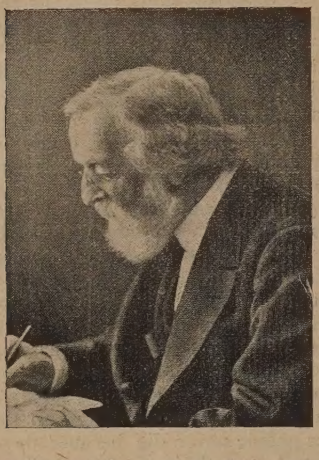
Swollen self-importance is the source of half the world's unhappiness.

Sorrows should not only be endured, they should be utilised—as heavy rains may be stored in reservoirs for the refreshing of the earth in time of drought, or into sluices for the driving of our mills.

# James Freeman Clarke, D.D.



[The Prize Essay Scheme of the Conference Guilds' Union* includes under Section III. "Hymns and Hymn Writers of the XIXth Century."]

To the productions of our own land during this prescribed period must be added, as a special feature, those which have come over in such number from America. Absent almost entirely from the earlier hymnody, they have quickly earned a distinct place in the modern hymnals now in use. Although very various in their degree of excellence, they have drawn into the ranks of hymn writers the greatest American poets. Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, Holmes, have all turned their genius, and with some success, to the enrichment of worship through verse.

But to the intimate hymn lover many other names are no less dear. Call them over: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Eliza Scudder, Ray Palmer, Theodore Parker, John Pierpont, Henry Ware, William H. Furness, Frederick H. Hedge, Edmund H. Sears, Samuel Longfellow, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Jex V. Blake, J. W. Chadwick, Minot Savage, and last, but not least, F. L. Hosmer and William C. Gannett. How great is our indebtedness to this source may be realised by making out a list of favourite hymns. Is it not certain to contain "O thou great friend to all the sons of men," "Dear Lord and Father of mankind," "It came upon the midnight clear," and probably a third of them will be of American origin?

Amongst these American hymn writers, Dr. Freeman Clarke, the friend of Emerson and the class-mate of Holmes, takes rightful place. His hymns have gained increasing prominence. Three found their way into Dr. Martineau's "Praise and Prayer," five into Mr. Oxford's "Berwick Hymnal," and six into Dr. Hunter's "Hymns of Faith and Life." Two of these are for use at baptisms, one is based on the Cana miracle, another on the returning prodigal, while, perhaps, the best of all are "Infinite Spirit, who art round us ever," and the less-known one beginning, "Give me, my God, to feel Thee in my joy."

Freeman Clarke was a poet at heart, albeit there was not given to him the finest strain of poetic expression. And, he was, moreover, a great believer in a hymn's impressive and uplifting power. During the difficult days of the Anti-Slavery War, "Some of his parishioners noticed that whenever anything very discouraging happened, he was sure the next Sunday to rise up in the pulpit, looking full of hope and courage, and when the time came for the first hymn, he would say: "We will sing the hymn beginning—

Give to the winds thy fears!
Hope, and be undismayed!

They learned to watch for the accustomed words; and one of them said: 'We lived on that hymn all through the war; everybody in the church learned it by heart'" (*Auto.*, p. 273). And when he lay dying, in readiness for eternity, he said, please repeat to me the hymn, "Abide with me."

Of his strenuous life and work there is surely no need to speak. He was a prolific writer, and his books are very popular here as in America. His "Ten Great Religions" (2 vols.) and "The Ideas of the Apostle Paul" should be read by all. Many people in theological trouble have found rest for their soul in "Orthodoxy: its Truths and Errors," "Steps of Belief," "Essentials and Non-Essentials," "Vexed Questions"—for these are not controversial in tone, but healing and comforting.

* See *Seed Sower*, January, 1903.

He declared always that the true business of a church was Eirenic, and not Polemic. His volume of published sermons appeal to all sorts of readers, being simple, plain, and interesting, full of healthy practical wisdom, genial charity, and direct actuality, with fresh incidents and telling illustrations from the life of every day.

In the burning moral and social questions of his country he was always in the thick of the fray as a fearless, yet chivalrous, advocate of the broadest rights of humanity. His forty years' ministry in Boston touches almost every important movement of the time: his whole life was a faithful fulfilment of the text of the first sermon he wrote, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

F. K. FREESTON.

## The Divine Alchemy.

Give me, my God, to feel Thee in my joy,
So shall my joy to love ennobled be;
Give me to feel Thee in the slight annoy,
That turns to hope through thy fine alchemy.

Give me, within the work that calls to-day,
To see Thy finger gently beckoning on;
Let struggle grow to freedom, as I pray,
And toil, begun from Thee, to Thee be done.

I lay each humblest hope within my prayer;
To Thee no high seraphic aims I bring;
My daily bread, rest, strength for common care,—
Yet all is truth within my offering.

And Thou whose fire forms rubies out of clay,
And bids dull charcoal into diamonds burn,
Add Thou the grace, while for Thy help I pray,
And this poor earth-cry into music turn.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.


# The Seed Sower.

**By post, 1/6 per annum.**

Special terms for churches taking 50 copies and above. The *Seed Sower* is admirably adapted for localising, and facilities are provided for that purpose. The circulation is already larger than that of any other magazine or journal published to meet the wants of our Free Churches. It gives a larger amount of matter, and every increase of circulation will be used to secure increased efficiency.

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Letters fo the Editor to be sent to 120, Gough Road, Birmingham.


## Martineau on Church Ideals.

In all the fellowship of our churches there is no name which carries with it such a measure of veneration and authority as that of James Martineau. As has happened before, however, in religious history, he is often called "our great leader" by men who seldom follow him; and his name is used in connection with a temper and a policy for which history affords scanty warrant. In the present critical phase through which our churches are passing, when many are discouraged and bewildered at the signs of decay and decrepitude that they see around them, it may be of use to ask—What has been the happiest genius of our church life? what the noblest ideals of religious association and fellowship amongt us, in the judgment of one whom we all delight to honour, and whose character and long experience entitle his words to receive our closest and most respectful attention? All the churches are passing through critical times; with a new Faith displacing the old, and a gulf between the old forms of church life and the affections of the masses of the people which it taxes the greatest ingenuity or genius to bridge. We ourselves have helped in no small measure to create this unsettlement, this unrest, this dissatisfaction with the old order. And, looking to the prevalent amount of contentment in our midst with the present conditions of our own church life and polity, it would be idle to pretend that there is not as much need for us to set our house in order as for any body of Christians in the land. In this connection the new "Life of Dr. Martineau" may afford us some useful counsel and guidance; and one or two illustrations and deductions may here be set forth.

It is clear, in the first place, that no countenance or authority can be obtained from Dr. Martineau for a policy of personal or ecclesiastical development upon sectarian lines. In his early Dublin days, before he had emancipated himself from an antiquated philosophy and theology, he favoured, it is true, a principle of doctrinal union among Unitarians. But this he soon abandoned; and the whole subsequent witness of his life and teaching was consistently opposed to the sectarian attitude or to the adoption of sectarian or dogmatic bonds of

union. Writing of this youthful stage of development, 60 years after (in 1891), he said, "This genuine dogmatic principle—the principle of an orthodoxy—everywhere prevailing, made church differ from church just as *our* doxy differed from *your* doxy, and took for granted the presence, by an act of collective thinking, of one and the same doxy among all the members of a single church."

In his reply to the greetings of the National Conference, in 1885, on the 80th anniversary of his birth, he said, "To the existence of a group of churches free in their constitution and open to the laws of natural change, I owe whatever scope has been given me for study and teaching on matters of religion. It is, however, no mere personal gratitude that retains me in allegiance to their inherited principle; but a conviction that the true religious life supplies grounds of sympathy and association deeper and wiser than can be expressed by any doctrinal names or formulas; and that free play can never be given to these general spiritual affinities till all stipulation, direct or implied, for specified agreement in theological opinion is discarded from the bases of church union."

Thirty-seven years before, when laying the corner-stone of his new church at Hope Street, Liverpool, he had declared, "I am a Unitarian; . . . but the society of worshippers, of which we are only the living members, and the church erected here, of which we shall be but transient tenants—these are not to be defined as Unitarian."

In this opposition to the sectarian temper, and to the adoption of a dogmatic name as a bond of union between our churches, Martineau was unflinchingly consistent. He would accept no casuistical pleas about the "broad connotation" which the name "Unitarian" was supposed to have attained; or admit any excuses from the fact that "others called our churches" by a name which he felt was not properly descriptive of their purpose or nature. To acquiesce in all this was to him "at once a logical blunder and a moral unfaithfulness, induced by forgetfulness of all but ourselves and our time." ("Life," II., 211.)

There were repeated efforts during his life, and there have been since his death, to make a theological association the official exponent of the life and activities of our churches, and to push the development of those churches along familiar sectarian lines. Whether this policy be right or wrong, it clearly can obtain no sanction from Martineau's life and teaching. "You cannot wonder," he writes, "at the grave regrets and apprehensions which, with these convictions, I feel in regard to the religious body which has supplied me with my life work. I cannot but enter into Paul's feeling towards Israel, and own that 'I have great sorrow in my heart, and could wish myself cast away for my brethren's sake' if they only could return to be 'the children of the promise.'"

The logical consequence of Martineau's principles of church polity and association would clearly be a strengthening and extension of the powers and functions of the Provincial Assemblies and National Conference, which are alike truly representative; and a restriction of purely theological or sectarian associations to their proper work of dogmatic exposition and education. This implies no hostility to such old and useful associations as the British and Foreign, which ought to be maintained in efficiency. What it does imply, however, is that the centre of gravity and seat of authority in our ecclesiastical life ought to reside, not there, but elsewhere, in the conferences which are properly representative and constituent assemblies of the several church fellowships. It is in the National Conference, I am convinced, if it will only rise to its duties and opportunities, that the chance of achieving greater cohesion, closer fellowship, and a more vigorous life among our scattered and often discouraged churches abides. That Dr. Martineau was able to make a shrewd estimate of matters connected with church organisation and control, is shewn by such words as these, written 63 years ago, and not without point and value to-day: "It has always appeared to me," he said, "that our body in London exists in a somewhat disorganised state, and is composed largely of accidental elements, contributed mainly by the country; that the most able and judicious, as well as opulent, of its members, are not those into whose hands the control of its ecclesiastical affairs is likely to fall; and that the sacrifice of money and time, requisite for the energetic maintenance of volun-

tary institutions, are necessarily more foreign to London than to provincial habits."

Dr. Martineau's wonderful address to the Leeds Conference in 1888 has not been fruitless, although its best results have yet to be gathered. His suggested name of "English Presbyterian" for a union of our churches has not proved acceptable; and, indeed, he himself wrote ("Life," II., 145) of it, "On the question of *Name* I am quite flexible, provided there be no theological particularism in its meaning." But the high ideal remains. Our ministers and people—like many of our Congregationalist brethren—are getting more and more weary of an isolation and weakness in religious effort and worship which answers no longer to antagonisms of thought and feeling in the progressive portions of modern society. Priestcraft is organised and compact. A vigorous "Evangelicalism" confronts it in serried ranks in every town and village. What we need is cohesion, united effort, mutual support, and a common platform for the scattered forces and discouraged atoms of the Broad and Progressive Religious Life of our country. This can never be achieved on the basis, and under the lead of a purely "Unitarian" association, as Martineau clearly saw. But it may and will be achieved if our National Conference will wake from its slumber, get itself a local habitation in the Metropolis, and a Secretary (like that of our leading theological association) of courage and address. If the spirit of even a Martineau was sometimes clouded and discouraged (as we know it was) by the spectacle of the acephalous and invertebrate body of churches to whom such a mighty charge had been given, it is little wonder that so many of the soldiers in the ranks to-day are distressed by the egoistic life of our separate communities—so out of touch with the cohesive and unifying principles of our time.

Our leading theological college has been complaining recently that the sons of our older families do not enter the ranks of our ministry; but the explanation is not far to seek, for those who know the conditions and prospects of ministerial life amongst us in recent years. If our National Conference met annually; if it had an alert and vigorous executive, including one or more sympathetic officials to give their whole time to the work; if it would invite broad-minded and able men from all quarters on to our platforms, and voice the convictions of our people on all the great social and humanitarian issues of the day—if it would do these things for us, the public mind and conscience would awaken to the existence of a new power in the land on the side of truth, liberty, and righteousness; and a flood-tide of new hope and courage would sweep through our churches, as they saw the dreams of their prophets and the often inarticulate desire of their own hearts beginning to be realised at last.

It is not antagonism to any existing organisations or officials that will help us. The work of these is needed, and they have justified their existence by their energy and address. What we want is to step forward into a larger, more united, and more effective religious life; not to step aside and engage in internal rivalries and hostilities, which will only further weaken our depleted forces. It is a great occasion and responsibility for the National Conference, which is soon to celebrate its majority. Will it use it, or will the centrifugal and disintegrating forces again prove too strong?

H. S. PERRIS.

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# A Graduated Syllabus of Moral Instruction for Elementary Schools.

(PART II.)

In a previous number (February) we gave the first part of this Syllabus, drawn up by the Moral Instruction League, of which Dr. Stanton Coit is the chairman. The Syllabus will be found useful to Sunday School teachers, especially when assisted with Bible readings. For further information apply to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Harrold Johnson, B.A., 19, Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.

## STANDARD IV.

1. MANNERS.
   - (*a*) Cheerfulness nnd contentedness: evil of grumbling and fault-finding.
   - (*b*) Self-consciousness: evil of conceit and shyness.
   - (*c*) Modesty.
   - (*d*) Self-respect.
2. HUMANITY.
   - As shown by public institutions—*e.g.*, the fire brigade, lifeboat, lighthouses, hospitals, asylums, red-cross society.
3. HONOUR.
   - (*a*) In the eyes of others: trustworthiness.
   - (*b*) In the eyes of self: self-respect.
   - (*c*) Avoidance of false pride.

4. JUSTICE.
   (*a*) Avoidance of injustice to animals in pursuit of fashion—*e.g.*, egret's feathers, the bearing-rein, the docking of horses' tails.
   (*b*) The justification for restraint and punishment in the home and the school.
5. TRUTHFULNESS.
   (*a*) In reporting: correctness; avoiding slander and gossip.
   (*b*) In action: candour; not to act a lie.
   (*c*) In thinking: eagerness for the truth.
6. PRUDENCE.
   (*a*) Need of forethought, and care in speech and action.
   (*b*) Temperance in eating, in work, and in pleasure.
7. COURAGE.
   (*a*) The importance of courage; avoidance of bravado.
   (*b*) Moral courage.
   (*c*) Presence of mind.
   (*d*) Heroic deeds done in the service of man.
   (*e*) Every-day heroism.
8. WORK.
   (*a*) Pride in thorough work.
   (*b*) Use of leisure time: value of hobbies.

## STANDARD V.

1. HABITS.
   (*a*) How acquired,
   (*b*) Habits to be cultivated and avoided.
2. MANNERS.
   (*a*) Courtesy and respectfulness towards all.
   (*b*) Self-restraint.
3. PATRIOTISM.
   (*a*) Duty of local patriotism: how to serve one's town or village.
   (*b*) The value of local institutions.
4. JUSTICE.
   (*a*) To all human beings, irrespective of sex, age, creed, social position, or nationality.
   (*b*) Charitableness in thought.
   (*c*) The value of courts of justice.
5. TRUTHFULNESS.
   (*a*) Respect for differences of opinion.
   (*b*) Living for the truth.
   (*c*) What men have sacrificed for the truth.
6. ZEAL.
   (*a*) The value of zeal and energy in overcoming difficulties.
   (*b*) The dangers of misdirected zeal—*e.g.*, bigotry, fanaticism.
7. WORK.
   (*a*) The dignity of and necessity for labour.
   (*b*) The earning of a living: different pursuits—their responsibilities and social value.
8. THRIFT.
   (*a*) Money: its uses and abuses.
   (*b*) Economy in little things.
   (*c*) Avoidance of extravagance and wastefulness.

## STANDARD VI.

1. MANNERS.
   As shown by
   (*a*) Dress.
   (*b*) Choice of friends, literature, and amusements.
2. PATRIOTISM.
   (*a*) What our forefathers have earned for us—*e.g.*, liberty, social and political institutions.
   (*b*) How each individual may serve his country and posterity.
3. PEACE AND WAR.
   (*a*) The value of peace and her victories.
   (*b*) The duty of citizens in time of war.
   (*c*) The evils of war.
4. JUSTICE.
   (*a*) Just and unjust relations between employers and employed.
   (*b*) Love of justice.
5. OWNERSHIP.
   Talents and opportunities: responsibility for the use of.
6. THRIFT.
   How and why to save.
7. TRUTHFULNESS.
   (*a*) Conquest of science over ignorance and superstition.
   (*b*) Progress of truth.
   (*c*) Love of truth.
8. SELF-KNOWLEDGE.
   (*a*) The need to know ourselves and to test our moral progress.
   (*b*) The claims of conscience (individual and social).
   (*c*) The enlightenment of conscience.

## STANDARD VII.

1. PATRIOTISM.
   (*a*) The vote: its nature and responsibilities.
   (*b*) The nation and its government.
   (*c*) Society as an organism; its development through the family, tribe, and nation.
   (*d*) Universal brotherhood.
2. PEACE AND WAR.
   (*a*) International relations.
   (*b*) Value of arbitration.
3. JUSTICE.
   (*a*) The development of the idea of justice from the earliest times.
   (*b*) The development of the humane spirit in laws.
4. OWNERSHIP.
   (*a*) Individual and collective ownership.
   (*b*) Responsibilities of ownership.
5. THRIFT.
   (*a*) Simplicity of living.
   (*b*) The evils of debt and gambling.
6. CO-OPERATION.
   (*a*) Between citizens.
   (*b*) Between nations: interchange of thought, arts, and material productions.
7. THE WILL.
   (*a*) The training of the will.
   (*b*) The right to be done intelligently, unhesitatingly, thoroughly, cheerfully, and zealously.
8. SELF-RESPECT.
   Self-respect and self-restraint in thought, word, and action.
9. IDEALS.
   The value and beauty of an ideal for life.

## Notes and Jottings.

A small flutter of ecclesiastical excitement has been caused by the action of the new Dean of Westminster in using a modified form of the Athanasian Creed in public worship. We believe that a revised translation of this venerable document was introduced at one of the services in the Abbey, and what are known as the damnatory clauses were omitted. This bold exercise of private judgment has been too much for some of the devotees of law and order. What will come next? If sacrilegious hands are laid upon one creed, are the others safe from the rationalist and the innovator? The logic of such questions is unanswerable. After all, the Church of England seems to care more for conformity than for real belief. What strikes us most about the Dean of Westminster's mild experiment is the futility of it. By no process of revision can the Athanasian Creed be made suitable for use in public worship. Was not one of the first acts of the Disestablished Church of Ireland to dismiss it into the silence and obscurity of private life, by making its use optional instead of compulsory?

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Echoes reach us now and then from the Highlands of Scotland, which show the remarkable vigour of old-fashioned Calvinism in the remote districts. A movement of secession from the United Free Church of Scotland is assuming considerable proportions. It is the old cry of heresy which has been raised, and the professors who teach unsound doctrine about the Bible are the special objects of dislike. Ignorance and prejudice seem to be invincible, and the process of sect-making goes on apace. The differences between the cultivated mind of the cities and universities and the slower wits of the Highlanders are accentuated by the fact that many of the latter speak Gælic, and charges of doctrinal laxity certainly lose nothing in the process of translation.

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We fear that there are people who do not disdain to use the help of these misunderstandings in the cause they have espoused. Any stick is good enough to beat a professor with. But the ignorance is almost past belief and sometimes becomes quite laughable. We hear the following story on good authority: A godly elder began one day to warn the people against the innovations of the Free Kirk, like organs and hymn books. One of them, he said, was called the Zenana! He did not know rightly what it was, but it was an innovation, and he was sure it was something "verra vicked."

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The Wesleyans have taken over the Westminster Aquarium as a tangible embodiment of their Twentieth Century Fund. It is an age of big enterprises in the religious world as elsewhere, and this is one which strikes the popular imagination. We are inclined to welcome whatever tends to back up the cast-iron system of the Churches, and to introduce freshness and variety into religious work. We confess, however, that these missions on a colossal scale, where people must be dealt with in masses and are brought under the spell of exciting services, seem to us to be in danger of sacrificing a great deal to the craving of bigness and the appetite for statistics. Whatever men may do in their politics, the first business of Christianity is to think in terms of the individual soul, and not in Continents and Empires.

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In this connection we may call attention to a rather striking article in the February *Commonwealth*, by Mr. Cecil E. Chesterton, on "The Numbering of the People." It is a summary of impressions made by the *Daily News* census of attendance at public worship in London. He has been struck by the draining of the small place of worship to make congregations for what he calls "the great prelates of the Free Churches." "The 'little Bethel,'" he says, "the chapel which men had built for themselves, and to which strong patriotic ties attached them, which, scorn it as we may, was the strength of old-fashioned Dissent, is being killed by the competition of the popular preacher." He believes that Nonconformity is in its healthiest state where the small chapel flourishes and it has no leaders.

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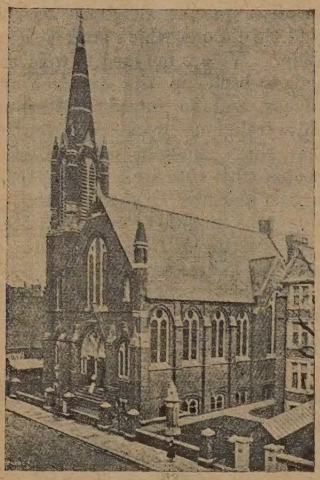
In the same paper Mr. Chesterton speaks with surprise at the want of vigour among the

Unitarians. He acknowledges the service of their protest, but thinks that the fact that their impulse was intellectual rather than spiritual is accountable for their want of progress. It is the opinion of a shrewd observer from outside, which is worth considering. We wonder, however, whether he is laughing in his sleeve when he speaks of the preponderance of women at Anglican services as a very promising feature, because the church with the women has the children of the future!



ESSEX CHURCH.

## Guild News.

LONDON GUILD UNION.—Very successful meetings were held at Essex Church, Kensington, on Wednesday, February 11th, to inaugurate the formation of a local association of the London Guilds, in connection with the National Conference Guilds' Union. Five Guilds were represented *viz.*: Mansford Street, Stepney, Highgate, Stratford and Essex Church. There was an attendance of about 130, chiefly young people. Service was held in the Church at 7-30 conducted by the Rev. G. Cooper, B.A. An address was given by the Rev. Joseph Wood, President of the National Guilds' Union, "The heroic temper amid common conditions." At the conclusion of the service the company adjourned to the schoolroom where refreshments were provided, and at 9 o'clock the business meeting was held. The Rev. F. K. Freeston took the chair, and there were also present the Revs. J. Ellis, V. Davis, J. Wicksteed, S. E. M. Edwards, G. Cooper and J. Wood. The Rev. J. Ellis read and proposed for adoption the draft of rules for the London Guilds' Union. This was seconded by Mr. A. Thompson.

The second rule states the objects of the Union as follows:—"The objects of this Union shall be:—1. To promote the formation of guilds in connection with the London churches on the roll of the National Conference, which seek to *(a)* foster the religious life and *(b)* inspire personal service. 2. To unite such Guilds into a local union for closer fellowship and co-operation. 3. To carry out this object by means of united services, conferences, social meetings, or any other methods which may suggest themselves." Mr. H. J. Noel proposed and Mr. C. A. Ginever seconded the appointment of officers as follows:—President, the Rev. F. K. Freeston; Vice-President, Mr. A. Thompson; Treasurer, Mr. Edgar Noel; Secretary, Rev. J. Ellis. A very stimulating address was then given by the Rev. H. Gow on "What young people can do for the Church" (see page 34.)

Mr. Gow's address aroused great enthusiasm and was followed by a number of short speeches from representatives of the various Guilds. The Rev. J. Wood heartily congratulated those present on the successful start made. The meeting came to a close with the Benediction.

THE ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE N.C. GUILDS UNION will be held on Monday, April 20th (Conference week), in Ullett Road Church, Liverpool. Council meeting at 5-15. Reception and tea at 6-15. Service in the church at 7-15, conducted by the Revs. W. H. Drummond, B.A., and E. D. Priestley Evans. Business meeting at 8; chairman, Rev. J. Wood; speakers, R. Robinson, Esq., Revs. F. K. Freeston, C. Hargrove, E. W. Lummis, etc. All Sunday School teachers, senior scholars, Guild members, and those interested in the Guild movement, are cordially invited to attend.

## Seed Corn.

Patience is not stagnation, but persistence.

Self-surrender to the truth is self-possession.

No man gets up by pulling his neighbour down.

"Herod feared John"—the bad always fear the good.

If you want to be miserable be always thinking of what is your due.

You may as well be crushed under a sandhill as under a mountain of marble.

Curses may be turned into blessings and blessings into curses. It depends on the temper.

Immortality for a poet does not necessarily mean popularity.

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The sun may heat and ice may skin the surface of the lake, but deep beneath the water is of same temperature in winter and summer. So deep down in the heart there may be peace and brightness whatever the condition of the surface.

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Envy nobody, covet nothing worldly, go quietly about your work, and believe that a man may work at an anvil and be as religious as if it were his office to stand at the altar.—*William Mountford.*

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There is no *end* of growing in the Christian life, but its *beginning* is in the simplicity of the most natural relations to God and to men. The busiest have time enough for it. The most uncultured know enough for it; and the wisest can only then be truly wise when they have returned to that simplicity. —*Henry Wilder Foote.*

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## News from the Field.

Sometimes people are too busy to be able to stop and tell of their doings. It needs a little leisure to chronicle the story of the passing days. Evidently, of late, this has been the case among our churches. Everyone is at his post. Ministers and people alike are active, and few of them pause to make any literary record.

The past month has witnessed the stir of activity everywhere. Not only the ordinary work has claimed attention, but the sound of preparations for "Triennial Conferences," "Christian Unions," and "Missionary" tours, can be heard on all hands. We shall all, very soon, be in the regular whirl of activities.

There are, however, a few items to chronicle even now.

The Postal Mission Committee have selected *Mr. R. Newell*, of Preston, to undertake Missionary work at *Bedfield* and *Framlingham*, and seem to be hopeful of good results from the appointment. This gentleman is a *lay worker*, and in that capacity may render useful service

The *Hope Street Congregation, Liverpool*, and the *Rev. R. A. Armstrong* are alike to be congratulated on the appointment of the *Rev. H. D. Roberts* as second minister of their church. Mr. Roberts has shewn his mettle and capacity by his work at *Chester*, and in *Liverpool*, and he will prove himself equal to the high trusts now confided to him. But who! will be found to carry on the Missionary work he is doing in *Liverpool?*

The *Rev. A. Harvie* has received a warm welcome in *Northampton*, and is bracing himself up to the fine work which is ready to his hand in that enterprising town.

It is pleasing to note that before *Mr. Manning* left *Sheffield* a number of his friends gathered together and made presentations to him and his wife. This will at least soften the sense of separation from work and friends.

Our friends at *Devonport* have done a good work. They have raised upwards of £400 for the purchase of the freehold of the church, and other good things. They are to be congratulated.

The *Manchester District Association* is steadily going on with its excellent work of visiting the churches within its boundaries. Since our last record they have paid visits to *Blackley* and *Pendleton*, and in each case with marked results for good. A new spirit and a deeper devotion are called into existence and activity by these friendly visitations of the churches.

The newly-formed church at *Aberystwyth* seems to be gathering friends and supporters and giving promise of permanence. In a town where there is so much life in connection with a University, we certainly ought to be represented by a vigorous church.

In days gone by there was no worker among our Irish congregations who was more genial and helpful than *Robert McCalmont, F.C.S., of Belfast*. It is pleasing to note that his son—an equally earnest son of our church—has just presented a substantial piece of property situated in Larne to the Free Library, in memory of his father, who was born in that pretty Irish town.

We hear that the *Rev. E. W. Lummis*, of *Warrington*, has received and accepted an invitation from the *Great Meeting, Leicester*. *Mr. Lummis* has moved somewhat quickly from place to place since he came among us, but his career has been a progressively prosperous one. In the great Midland town he will have a fine field for all his powers, and will do well to root himself in the life of the place. Any man may find in such a sphere occupation for every gift and grace he possesses.

The *Rev. J. C. Street*, of *Shrewsbury*, has been invited by the *British and Foreign Unitarian Association* and some of our *Southern Churches* to visit *Ringwood, Bournemouth, Poole, Parkstone, Wareham*, and *Portsmouth*, to preach in each of these places on ten successive days, and to help and encourage the workers there. We understand be has undertaken the task, and hope he may be successful in his mission.

Just as we are going to press, we have heard with great sorrow of the death of the *Rev. S. W. Freckleton*, of *Northampton*. During a long and active life *Mr. Freckleton* has been a brave, outspoken, and powerful champion of the loftiest principles of our Free Churches. Coming over to us from the *Baptist Church*, he brought with him great earnestness and enthusiasm, which were enlisted and consecrated in the service of a Free Theology and a wide fellowship. He left his mark as a strong and fearless prophet of righteousness in various fields of labour, and his memory will long be held in honour by large numbers of men and women who were quickened by his brave and inspiring preaching.

SCRUTATOR.

February 16th, 1903.

# THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

## Doing His Will.

There is not a sweeter sight in the world than a little child asleep, with rosy cheeks and parted lips; and some little children sleep so soundly that we can take them up in our arms and carry them from one room to another, and they do not know we have done it. Then we say he is *unconscious*, for he knows nothing of what is going on around him; and when he awakes, we say he is *conscious* again, for he knows what is going on. The knowledge which you have of the will of God, men call your *Conscience*, because you are *conscious, you know* what is right for you. *Conscience* is not a thing, but only a name for this knowledge of the will of God, just as *awake*, is not a thing, but only a name for not being asleep.

A little boy wishes to steal apples. He goes over, he looks at them through the broken hedge of the orchard. But something says, "No! Don't do it. It is wrong." Conscience is telling him what is God's will for him, and he goes away a happier boy for having done right.

As I have said, everybody has this *Conscience*, or knowledge of the will of our Heavenly Father, and it is convenient to have a short word to call it by when we wish to speak of this knowledge. In some people consciousness of His will is quicker and clearer than in others, and this depends upon the quietness and care with which they wait on God to know His will. They who attend most to Him, who try to obey Him best, have the quickest and clearest consciousness of His will; and they who are careless, who do not attend to His way, or who disobey it, have their consciousness dulled, and less quick to guide and check them. We know that when we would do wrong, or have done wrong, the consciousness of our Heavenly Father's will checks us, and we feel bad, afraid, unhappy; while, when we would do right, or have done right, we feel encouraged, confident, and happy, for we are obeying God our Heavenly Father. This, men call having a good or having a bad conscience, according as we have done good or bad. Nothing makes us more unhappy than knowing that we have done wrong, and nothing makes us happier than knowing that we have obeyed our Heavenly Father. Peter, the rugged fisherman of Capernaum, who was Jesus' chief disciple, in one of his short letters in the Bible, calls this happy state "The answer of a good conscience towards God," and nothing can be fuller of joy, peace, and confidence, than knowing that our Heavenly Father is with us in what we do.

A little girl has plucked flowers which she should not have taken. Her mother questions her, and if she knew she was doing wrong, she stands before her mother with blushing cheeks and drooping head; but if she did not know, she looks up fearlessly into her mother's eyes, and tells her so.

It was this consciousness which made the life of Jesus so strong, peaceful, joyful. Speaking to the crowds in the Golden Temple on the last day of their great Festival of Bowers, when the people left their homes and lived outside in bowers of green branches, He told them that He came not to do His own will, but the will of His Father in Heaven. And when alone with His disciples He told them that God who dwelt in Him, did His will through Him, adding "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid." They were to obey their Heavenly Father as He did, and not to be frightened, and they would have the peace which He had.

You have heard of the sailor's compass? The next time you are in a ship, go and look at it. When the sailor is in darkness on the wide sea, he looks at his compass, and it points the way for him to go; and a good sailor is very careful that his compass is right, that it truly points the right way. He cannot *see* what makes it do so, but he takes all the care he can that it should be right, and then he trusts it. And so, although we cannot *hear* our Heavenly Father telling us what is right for us to do, we should, by waiting in stillness and in prayer on Him, take all the care we can that nothing on our part shall prevent our knowing what is His will for us, and then trust and obey that consciousness without fear. And the more we love and obey our Heavenly Father, the clearer and quicker will our knowledge of his will,—which men call *conscience*—become.

## The Sweetest Thing.

Beneath a small window
A dear little bird
Kept singing this song
(And I heard every word):
"Oh, sweet are the berries,
The red and the white,
And sweet are the crumbs
That you gave me last night;
And sweet to the squirrels
Are nuts in the wood!
But there's nothing so sweet
As a child that is good!"

"Oh, jam is much sweeter!"
Said dear little Nell;
"And there's treacle and honey
And jelly as well.
Here's a big piece of bread
And some crumbs for your tea,
Don't you think these are sweeter
Than Maggie or me?"
But Robin made answer
As loud as he could,
"There's nothing so sweet
As a girl that is good!"